



**Children's Court
Victoria**

PRACTICE NOTE

No. 1 of 2010

NEW MODEL CONFERENCES (NMC)

This Practice Note is issued pursuant to Section 592 of the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005*.

From 1 July 2010, the Children's Court at Melbourne will trial a new model for dispute resolution conferences (DRC).

Between 1 July 2010 and 31 December 2010, approximately 50 cases from the Footscray office of the Department of Human Services will be identified for referral into the new process.

The new process (described as a "New Model Conference") is intended to facilitate the early resolution of applications. This approach was endorsed in the Premier's Child Protection Taskforce Report dated 26 February 2010. NMCs will:

- be conducted at the Victoria Legal Aid Roundtable Dispute Management Centre, 338 La Trobe Street, Melbourne (unless one of the parties is in custody or there are security concerns identified, in which case they will be held at the Court);
- require better preparation by participants;
- allow more time for discussion in a less stressful environment;
- require decision-makers to be present at the conference; and
- require appropriate behaviour by all participants.

The Court has prepared guidelines for conducting a NMC. The guidelines are available on the Children's Court website at www.childrenscourt.vic.gov.au/resources/publications.

Judge Paul Grant
President
Children's Court of Victoria

23 June 2010